THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

NORTH WALES

LUNATIC ASYLUM,

DENBIGH.

FOR THE YEAR M.DCCC.XLIX.

DENBIGH:

PRINTED AT THE CLWYDIAN-OFFICE, BY THOMAS GEE.

1849.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

https://archive.org/details/b30304398

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee of Visitors of the North Wales Asylum have the satisfaction of presenting to the Subscribers, and to the Justices of the several Quarter Sessions, the report of the Medical Officers of the Institution; and in doing so, of adding their testimony to the perfect manner in which their duties have been discharged, as well as to the just commendation which they have paid to the various officers of the institution.

The visitors need not state that in this, the first year of their establishment, they have had serious difficulties to contend with, both from the novelty of the management, in which few, if any, had any previous experience—from the heavy debts still unliquidated on account of the building fund, principally owing to the tardiness in one case, and refusal in another, of the quotas due from two of the counties—from the absolute necessity of receiving pauper patients on the lowest possible terms—from the comparatively small number of patients at the commencement, requiring the same extent of establishment as would be nearly sufficient for the number originally contemplated in the house—but especially from their not having in this, the infancy of their establishment, reaped the benefit to any extent of the higher classes of patients, who will, it is expected hereafter be greatly augmented.

Under these circumstances the Board of Visitors fixed the weekly payment at 9*s.*, including clothes; a sum considerably less than that demanded at the asylums from whence many of the patients were removed, but which they anticipated would ere long cover their expense, and that the extra cost at the commencement would be entirely reduced.

They subjoin a table showing how this has as yet worked, and they have the gratification of feeling that before another year has elapsed, the income will so far have gained on the expenditure, as not only to liquidate the loss upon the patients at the opening of the establishment, but also to authorize the committee to reduce the weekly payments to such an extent

as to remove every inducement to the delay in placing the patients under curative treatment at the first outbreak of the disease. They cannot too often repeat or impress it upon Boards of Guardians, that from the best information they have obtained, if this disease is subjected to proper medical treatment in the earliest stage, in six cases out of seven a permanent cure is effected.

The Board of Visitors have to express their regret that they have not as yet been enabled to close their building account, which, as continuing to entail some expense of interest, is to be regretted; but more especially on account of the complication which it causes in their financial statement.

This is principally occasioned by the causes already mentioned, but which they trust will be obviated during the ensuing year, especially as they have been assured that the balance of the quota from the county of Carnarvon would have been paid but for the absence of a sufficient number of justices at their last sessions. In the event of the payments from any of the associated counties, as well as from any Board of Guardians, not being forthwith liquidated, the Board of Visitors recommend to the annual meeting, that they should be authorized to take such steps as they may be advised to enforce the payment. In one instance, the claim is for the portion of the original contribution, amounting to £154 14*s.* 4*d.*, as well as to interest accruing upon that contribution to the amount of £88 0*s.* 4*d.* up to 31st December, 1849; and further to the time of payment.

This claim is based upon the following clause in the agreement, signed by a committee of seven justices, and enrolled at their quarter sessions, dated December 19th, 1848, being the day before their Michaelmas sessions:—

"And whereas, in consequence of the deficient powers given, and other errors in the Act of the 8th and the 9th Vict., cap. 126, it was found necessary to obtain an amendment of such Act before monies could be securely borrowed for the defraying the expenses of erecting such Asylum by the several counties, and in order to prevent the evils arising from the delay this occasioned in procuring such funds, and the consequent stoppage of the buildings, by which an additional expense of two thousand pounds would have been incurred, it was adjudged necessary that advances of monies should be obtained by loan, during such interval.

"It is therefore further stipulated and agreed, that such expenses, as well as interest due upon the advances until next Michaelmas sessions,

shall be added to, and deemed a part of, the expenses of erecting and providing such Asylum; and be borne and paid out of the general fund of the joint Asylum; but after such date, the interest upon any sum borrowed and then remaining unpaid shall be charged in just proportions to such counties as may not as yet have made payment of their full proportions of such expenses as yet incurred and charged to them.

"And hereunto, we, the undersigned, being the major part of the committee of justices for the counties of Denbigh, Flint, Anglesea, Carnarvon, and Merioneth, and the subscribers to the said Hospital for the Insane for North Wales, do, on the part and behalf of the said counties, and of the said subscribers, set our hands the 19th day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight.

"*Signed on behalf of the county of Merioneth:—*

C. T. Thruston. W. W. E. Wynne.
George Carson. Hugh Reveley.
John Jones. L. O. Edwards.
Samuel Holland, junr."

The Board, in compliance with the requirements of the 8th and 9th Vict., cap. 126, apportioned the charge of the necessary repairs, and those alterations of the building which their experience has shown to be absolutely essential (as for example a better sewerage, and a more extensive supply of water) amongst the several counties in the proportions set forth by their agreement, and request the general meeting to direct their clerk to make out orders upon the treasure of the several counties for the following amounts:—

	£.	s.	d.
Denbighshire,	171	8	10
Flintshire,	127	11	10
Anglesea,	98	2	11
Carnarvonshire,	155	14	7
Merionethshire,	75	4	11
	£628	3	1

And that the quotas, if so desired, be received in two quarterly instalments: but they recommend in future that the orders of the like nature be made

quarterly. They concur in the recommendation of the medical officers relating to the erection of a gasometer; but they are not at present in a position to offer any specific propositions on the subject.

The Board also recommend to the immediate consideration of the annual meeting the inconvenience of the place for mangling the clothes, as well as the laundry department. And further, that it is absolutely necessary for the economical management of the land, that farm-buildings, to the extent of a pigsty, stable, cowhouse, and garden-house, for which they have applied for plans, should be erected as soon as convenient. The Board would refer generally to the report of their medical officers for the statistics as well as for all other information relative to the patients.

The Board have directed a statement of their accounts to be appended to this report.

JOHN HEATON, Chairman.

THE

MEDICAL OFFICERS' REPORT.

The first year in the existence of a large public Institution is always one fraught with anxiety to those who are entrusted with its internal management. It is with much pleasure that we are enabled to say that this period has elapsed without the occurrence of a single untoward event: and we have the gratification of reporting to the Committee of Visitors, that the "North Wales Asylum" is, in every respect, in a most satisfactory and efficient state.

"The law of kindness" has been the rule by which we have essayed to govern. We have assiduously endeavoured to impress upon the minds of our attendants, that forbearance, gentleness, and patience, are essential to the due performance of their duties towards the unfortunate objects of their care; and we are willing to hope that we have succeeded in reducing these precepts into practice, as we have never been able to detect a single instance of harshness, either in language or manner, towards the patients, except in one case, where the crime was instantly visited with the dismissal of the attendant, a female.

The insane are extremely imitative, and the uniform kindness and cheerfulness of the attendants have, we trust, in a great measure, been communicated to the patients. The strong assist and sympathize with the weak, and personal collisions are very rare among the patients. We have always endeavoured to realize the ideal of a happy and united family. Instances of patients, the most violent and dangerous, when admitted, becoming speedily composed, tranquil, and manageable, are numerous. In the case of one man, who was goaded, by unkind and harsh treatment, into a state of ferocious mania (and who was brought into the Asylum manacled so cruelly, that he will bear the marks of the handcuffs

while he lives)—it is most gratifying to be enabled to state, that he gradually became confiding and tractable, and he is now as harmless as any patient in the house. In another instance, a poor young creature, who, before her admission, was tied down to her bed for many months, quickly discovered the difference between the treatment she had been previously subject to, and the kindness and freedom she experienced at the Asylum, and very soon gained confidence in those about her, and rapidly recovered. Soon after her discharge from the Asylum, she wrote to the matron, to request she might be taken back as a servant; and she is now an excellent assistant in the wards, and a general favorite with the patients. We have the satisfaction of stating, that we have never been obliged to resort to any mechanical restraint, beyond temporary seclusion in the padded room; and then only in cases of great and dangerous excitement.

At the commencement of this year, we indulged the patients with a dance—seventy of the patients, males and females, assembled, about six o'clock in the evening, in the corridor on the female side of the house, which was decorated for the occasion with evergreens, &c. A piano forte was procured, and dancing commenced with great spirit, and was kept up till nine o'clock. During the evening, the males were supplied with a moderate allowance of good ale, and the females with tea and a little negus. It was truly gratifying and affecting to witness the decorum as well as the joyous delight of these poor people. The success of this our first experiment at an assemblage of the sexes was such as to induce us to hope that much good may result from an occasional repetition of a similar indulgence.

Since the opening of the Asylum, 142 patients have been admitted :—18 of whom have been discharged cured; 5 at the request of their friends, more or less relieved :—and 10 have died. The amount of cures may appear small when placed in comparison with other similar institutions; but it must be taken into consideration that the greater proportion of patients have been removed from other Asylums, many having been confined for years in a state of chronic and hopeless insanity, and in a very weak and infirm condition of health.

We are sorry to observe that great reluctance exists upon the part of many parish authorities to remove their insane paupers into the Asylum, during the early and most curable stage of the complaint. This short-sighted pecuniary consideration, in preventing patients from being admit-

ted at the onset of the disease, operates most perniciously in diminishing the number of recoveries. It is too much the practice to detain the poor creatures at home with their friends, by whom they are cruelly or injudiciously treated, and they are seldom sent to the Asylum until they become perfectly unmanageable; thereby rendering their recovery much more difficult, and eventually increasing the expense most materially to their parishes. By referring to Table iv., it will be seen that the greater number of cases discharged cured, were under early treatment.

It is to us a source of great uneasiness, as well as a matter of the deepest regret, that we are under the sad necessity of constantly dismissing from the Asylum pauper patients, without any pecuniary provision. It must be obvious to any one in the least acquainted with insanity, that it is of the utmost importance that the discharged patients should have some means of temporary subsistence until the confidence of their friends and neighbours is restored. We would beg leave therefore most earnestly to recommend the "ABLETT FUND," and its objects, to the favorable consideration of the humane and benevolent.

We have employed the patients as much as possible—the males in gardening, &c., and the females in sewing, household work, ironing, &c. It would tend much to vary the occupation if they could be instructed in the mode of making mats, &c. &c.

We are frequently at a loss to find suitable amusement for the patients, and we beg to propose to the Committee to have a portion of the ground allotted and levelled for a bowling-green.

We wish to call the attention of the Committee to the necessity of erecting a new mangle-room, as the one now in use was originally intended for a straw-house, detached from the building; and during the last month or two it has been so cold that the patients have objected to go there. We beg also to remind the Committee of the present inadequate system of lighting the house; and we earnestly recommend the adoption of gas, as being the most efficient, economical, and safe.

The Commissioners in Lunacy have paid the Asylum two visits, and we append their reports.

NORTH WALES ASYLUM, *July 27th*, 1849.

"This Asylum at present contains 93 patients; of these, 37 are males and 56 are females. Of the males, 2, and of the females, 4, are private patients. Since the opening of the Asylum, on the 14th of November,

1848, 112 patients have been admitted; 11 have been discharged, and 9 have died.

"We have to-day, personally, examined the whole of the patients, and inspected every part of the building. Generally speaking, the patients were in a very tranquil and comfortable state, and no one was under mechanical restraint or seclusion. The patients were clean in their persons, and their clothing was of good quality.

"The building was throughout clean and in excellent order.

"We understand that, on an average, 20 males are employed in the garden, or in pumping, and in household work; and that between 30 and 40 of the women occupy themselves in the laundry, and at needle-work, &c.

"Prayers are read regularly twice a week, and on Sunday; and we learn that between 40 and 50 generally attend.

"On the whole, we are much pleased with the general construction of the Asylum, which is remarkably perfect in every convenience for the care and treatment of the insane; and the present conduct of the establishment is highly creditable to the medical officers and those under their control.

"SIGNED,

"W. G. CAMPBELL, } Commissioners
"SAMUEL GASKELL, } in Lunacy."

"NORTH WALES LUNATIC ASYLUM, *Nov.* 12*th*, 1849.

"This Asylum contains 103 patients; of whom 43 are males, and 60 are females: 16 appear at present to be under medical treatment. No one was under restraint or in seclusion at the time of our visit.

"Since the last visit of the Commissioners, on the 27th of July, 23 patients have been admitted, 11 have been discharged, and 1 has died from diarrhœa.

"Of the patients now in the Asylum, about 40 attend chapel (where the Church service is performed regularly every Sunday), and also the prayers, which are read twice a week. About 30 of the males, and half of the females are employed in various ways—the men in field work, pumping, &c., and the women in the laundry, and in household and needle-work.

"We found the patients tranquil and apparently comfortable: their body-clothing good, and the bed and bedding exceedingly clean. The day-

rooms and bed-rooms were clean, well ventilated, and in good order. In addition to the padded-rooms already in use, there are others in the course of erection. There are baths throughout the establishment, in which the patients are bathed once a week, and also lavratories for their daily use.

"We are exceedingly satisfied with the general condition of the Asylum, which is extremely creditable to the skill and attention of the visiting physician, the resident medical officer, and matron.

"SIGNED,

"B. W. PROCTOR, } Commissioners
"T. TURNER, } in Lunacy."

We cannot conclude our report without an expression of much obligation and gratitude to the Chairman and Committee of Visitors for the uniform and kind support we have always experienced at their hands.

From the attention, kindness, and efficiency of the Matron, Mrs. Shaw, we have derived much and valuable assistance: and our thanks are due to Mr. Robinson, the Clerk and Steward, for the attention, steadiness, and efficiency he has always displayed in the discharge of his duty. We should be doing an act of injustice, if we neglected to tender our meed of praise to the Attendants, both male and female, for the kindness they have shown to the patients, and the readiness with which they have always attended to our instructions.

R. LLOYD WILLIAMS, *Visiting Physician.*
GEO. T. JONES, *Superintendant.*

THE FOLLOWING TABLES ARE GIVEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF FURNISHING STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECTS TO WHICH THEY REFER.

TABLE I.

Showing admissions, discharges, and deaths, since opening of the Asylum.

	Admitted.	Discharged— Recovered.	At request of friends.	Escaped.	Died.	Remain.
Private—males . .	4	..	1	..	..	3
„ females .	9	2	3	..	..	4
Paupers—males . .	61	9	..	1*	8	43
„ females .	68	7	1	1†	2	57
Total . .	142	18	5	2	10	107

* Readmitted after an elapse of 4 months. † Secreted by her friends.

TABLE II.

Showing the form of disease in the 142 *patients admitted.*

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Mania acute . .	11	13	24
„ „ attempted suicide	1	1	2
„ „ chronic .	33	39	72
„ „ with general paralysis .	2	..	2
Dementia . . .	11	10	21
Melancholia . .	1	4	5
Epilepsy . . .	3	2	5
Idiots . . .	4	2	6
Moral insanity . .	..	4	4
Mania puerperal . .	..	1	1
Total . .	66	76	142

TABLE III.

Showing form of disease in 18 *cases discharged cured.*

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Mania acute	6	5	11
„ chronic	2	1	3
„ puerperal	..	1	1
Melancholia	1	..	1
Moral insanity	..	2	2
Total	9	9	18

TABLE IV.

Showing the duration of disease upon the 18 *cases on admission.*

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under one month . . .	4	4	8
„ three ditto . . .	3	2	5
„ six ditto . . .	1	1	2
„ ten ditto . . .	1	2	3
Total . . .	9	9	18

TABLE V.

Showing the duration of treatment in the Institution of those cases discharged cured.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Under three months	2	2	4
„ six ditto	6	2	8
„ ten ditto	1	5	6
Total	9	9	18

Average—21½ weeks.

TABLE VI.

Showing the number of attacks in those cases discharged cured.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
One	6	4	10
Two	2	4	6
Three	1	..	1
Several	..	1	1
Total	9	9	18

TABLE VII.

Showing the form of mental disease in ten cases of deaths.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Mania acute	3	..	3
„ chronic	1	1	2
„ dementia	2	..	2
Epilepsy	2	1	3
Total	8	2	10

TABLE VIII.

Showing the causes of death.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Brain, softening of	1	..	1
Diarrhœa	3	..	3
Epilepsy	2	1	3
Exhaustion	1	..	1
Gangrene	1	..	1
Heart, disease of	..	1	1
Total	8	2	10

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT.

As the Committee of Visitors and the Medical Officers of the North Wales Lunatic Asylum are now about to present their first annual report, perhaps it will be expected that the Chaplain should make a few brief observations relative to his duties, and to the effect of his ministrations upon the unfortunate persons placed under his spiritual care.

The duties in chapel during the past year, "according to the regulations laid down for his guidance by the Committee of Visitors," have been, an afternoon service with a sermon on Sundays, and prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays. At the commencement of his ministrations among them, the Chaplain confined himself to saying the prayers, and delivering a short and simple discourse. After a time, however, "with the concurrence of the superintendant," psalmody was introduced—and it is to be hoped with a beneficial effect. It is not to be expected, that after the short experience of twelve months, he should be able to give any very decided opinion as to the effect which attendance at public worship in chapel, and ministerial intercourse in the wards, have upon the insane. He, however, begs to state his conviction, that religious instruction administered with due caution is very beneficial to certain classes of patients, and tends to calm their minds, to soothe their sorrows, and to afford them in many cases great consolations.

The number of patients who attend service on Sunday averages from forty to fifty. Several of them exhibit great devotion during the service, join in the responses and singing, and listen attentively to the sermon; and almost all conduct themselves in such a manner as would be highly creditable to a congregation of sane persons.

In concluding these few remarks, the Chaplain feels it his duty to observe that the system of uniform kindness, which is pursued throughout the establishment towards the insane, tends in the greatest degree to prepare their minds for the reception of religious instruction: in fact were the contrary system pursued, the labours of a clergyman in an Asylum would be perfectly useless; for it would be mere mockery to talk of the goodness of God, and the love of Christ, to persons who were suffering ill treatment from those who ought to be their protectors.

BRABAZON HALLOWES, CHAPLAIN.

General Statement of the Receipts and Payments on the Original Building and Furnishing Account of the North Wales Asylum, from the close of Account already furnished to the Counties to the 31st of December, 1849.

RECEIPTS.

	1848. £.	s	d.	1849. £.	s.	d.	*Total.* £.	s.	d.
Subscriptions - -	1	5	0	5	0	0	6	5	0
Cash for building materials	13	5	4	..	..	..	13	5	4
Balance of matron's travelling expenses - -	1	15	0	..	..	..	1	15	0
Amount on account of quota from the County of Flint	1000	0	0	643	15	11	1643	15	11
Balance of quota from the County of Anglesey -	..	..	..	961	18	1	961	18	1
Ditto do. Merioneth, £2700, less £31, 10*s.* 0*d.* retained by the Exchequer Commissioners for their law expenses - -	..	..	..	2668	10	0	2668	10	0
Amount from the Executors of the late James Henry Clough, Esq. - -	..	..	..	74	5	5	74	5	5
Amount from the Denbigh Corporation - -	..	..	..	76	18	8	76	18	8
Bank interest and commission	0	6	10	3	12	3	3	19	1
	£.1016	12	2	...4434	0	4			
							£5450	12	6

PAYMENTS.

	1848. £.	s.	d.	1849. £.	s.	d.	*Total.* £.	s.	d.
Balance due to Treasurer, as per statement, Oct. 20, 1848,	354	7	11	..	..	..	354	7	11
Furniture and fixtures -	287	0	4	775	14	6	1062	14	10
Clothing and bedding -	79	15	6	739	9	2	819	4	8
Freight, carriage, and travelling expenses - -	36	3	0	15	10	3	51	13	3
Printing, stationery, and advertisements - -	3	11	9	98	9	4	102	1	1
Salaries and wages due previous to opening Asylum	89	15	5	44	8	3	134	3	8
Provisions, coals, &c. &c. -	42	1	4	17	0	2	59	1	6
Bills left unpaid by the clerk of the works - -	44	12	11	25	18	3	70	11	2
Bank interest & commission	19	11	2	35	14	9	55	5	11
Mr. John Williams, amount of promissory notes -	1000	0	0	..	..	..	1000	0	0
Interest on loans - -	..	..	..	68	0	0	68	0	0
Transferred to Subscribers' fund - - -	..	..	..	515	15	7	515	15	7
Messrs. Fulljames & Waller, balance of account- -	..	..	..	439	12	0	439	12	0
	£.1956	19	4	...2775	12	3			
Balance -				-		-	718	0	11
							£5450	12	6

Liabilities and Assets of the Counties in union on Original Building and Furnishing Account.

LIABILITIES.		£.	s.	d.
Outstanding bills on building, furnishing, and clothing account -		81	16	0
To the county of Denbigh (overpaid quota) - - -		441	18	0
Mr. Tellet on promissory notes - -	600 0 0			
Interest on ditto -	15 0 0			
		615	0	0
Mr. John Williams on promissory notes - -	1520 0 0			
Interest on ditto -	38 0 0			
		1558	0	0
		£.2696	14	0

ASSETS.				£.	s.	d.
Balance brought from page 15 -				718	0	11
Balance of quota due from the county of Merioneth - -	154	14	3			
Interest and commission on £2823, 4*s.* 3*d.*, from 20th October, 1848, to 2d May, 1849 -	79	1	4			
	233	15	7			
Interest and commission on £233, 15*s.* 7*d.*, from 3rd of May to 31st of December, 1849 -	8	19	0			
				242	14	7
Balance of quota from the county of Carnarvon - - -	1320	15	0			
Interest and commission on £4500, from 29th Sept. 1847, to 28th July, 1848 - -	194	16	5			
	1515	11	5			
Interest and commission on £1515, 11*s.* 5*d.*, from 20th Oct., 1848 (when balance sheet was drawn out), to 31st December, 1849	94	15	0			
				1610	6	5
Balance against counties -				125	12	1
				£2696	14	0

Particulars of Payments on Building Account Current, from opening of Asylum to December 31st, 1848.

	£.	s.	d.
Insurance, rates, rents, tithes, and taxes - - -	19	11	10
Accountant - - - - -	17	2	6
Masons and bricklayers - - - -	9	5	8
Plumber - - - - -	3	0	9
Gardener and labourers employed in laying out the grounds -	51	17	10
Stone and brick - - - - -	3	12	0
	£.104	10	7

This amount is chargeable to Counties, in addition to that for the year 1849.